

# THE BUFFALO BILL



A WEEKLY PUBLICATION

STORIES

DEVOTED TO BORDER HISTORY

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 79-89 Seventh Ave., N. Y.

No. 230.

HARRY M. LANE.

Price, Five Cents.

## BUFFALO BILL'S KIOWA FOE

OR BUCKSKIN SAM'S RED HAND



BY  
THE AUTHOR  
OF  
"BUFFALO BILL"

The Indians, used though they were to courage under torture, were amazed at the dauntless fortitude displayed by Buffalo Bill and his brother scout.





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 **Beware of Wild West imitations of the Buffalo Bill Stories. They are about fictitious characters. The Buffalo Bill weekly is the only weekly containing the adventures of Buffalo Bill, (Col. W. F. Cody), who is known all over the world as the king of scouts.**

No. 230.

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## BUFFALO BILL'S KIOWA FOE

OR,

HARRY M. LANE.

### Buckskin Sam's Red Hand.

By the author of "BUFFALO BILL."

#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE CAPTURE OF DOVE EYE.

"Dove Eye shall never be the bride of a skulking Kiowa! She is the Rose of the Pawnees! Her father and her tribe will never see her taken to the wigwam of a bitter and treacherous enemy."

Saying these angry words, Spotted Tail, the old war chief of the Pawnees, folded his arms and glared savagely at Yellow Bear, the equally redoubtable and famous chief of the Kiowas.

Yellow Bear, with many ponies and other rich presents, had ridden to the village of Spotted Tail one summer day in the late sixties to ask him for the hand of his only daughter in marriage.

Dove Eye, the Rose of the Pawnees, was of the loveliest type of Indian beauty. She had become famous

among all the tribes of the plains, and many noted chiefs had asked for her hand, and asked in vain. She had declared that she would die sooner than marry a man whom she did not love, and her father, who loved her deeply, let her have her own way—very contrary to the usual habit of an Indian parent.

Yellow Bear was a tall and savage-looking warrior. His haughty face was convulsed with rage at the curt answer given to his request, but with an effort he controlled his anger and replied, calmly:

"Let the maiden herself be sent for. The eyes of Yellow Bear have beheld her more than once, and her beauty made his heart as weak as water. It may be that she also has looked upon him with favor. If it be so, surely Spotted Tail will not deny her the wish of her heart. There is no war now between the Kiowas and the Paw-



nees. Was not the hatchet buried at a solemn council many moons ago?"

The old chief of the Pawnees grunted doubtfully.

"The Kiowas are snakes in the grass!" he declared, with rather discourteous frankness. "How do we know when they will dig up the hatchet? We do not trust them. We stay on guard always, ready to meet their attack. But it shall be as Yellow Bear says. Long ago Spotted Tail vowed that the Rose of the Pawnees should wed the man of her choice. She shall give the Kiowa chief his answer—and Spotted Tail does not fear what it will be."

The Pawnee called up one of his young men, who was standing near by, watching the famous Kiowa warrior with deep interest, and commanded him to summon his daughter Dove Eye into his presence.

A handsome Indian girl is a decided rarity, but the daughter of Spotted Tail was an exception to the rule. She was only seventeen years old, but her figure was perfectly formed and her face was regular, in its outlines and exquisite in complexion, being remarkably light for the daughter of a Pawnee. This was due to the fact that her mother had been a white woman, captured and made a wife of Spotted Tail in the old days when he warred against the palefaces instead of being in alliance with them, as he now was.

She came up, and stood obediently before her father, not even deigning to look at the Kiowa.

"Dove Eye, you are the heart of Spotted Tail," said the old chief, fondly, "and he cannot bear to part with you. But if it is your will, you shall go to the wigwam of the man you love and be his bride. This chief here, Yellow Bear, the Kiowa, asks you in marriage. Speak with a straight tongue! Do you care for him? Will you go with him?"

Dove Eye looked up. She answered no word, but simply took a small, beautifully ornamented knife from her wampum girdle.

She offered it by the haft to her father.

"What is this, my daughter?" asked the Pawnee, in surprise.

"Father, kill me, if you will, but do not force me to wed Yellow Bear," was the girl's reply. "I hate him, and even if I loved him, I would not wed a Kiowa—one of the most treacherous enemies of our people."

The face of Spotted Tail lightened up.

"You are truly my daughter, Dove Eye," he said. "I have no thought of forcing you to marry any man, least

of all this Kiowa. I am glad of your answer. Go back to your wigwam."

Obediently, the girl turned and went, casting a glance at Yellow Bear which showed plainly how far she was from loving him.

Left alone, the two men glared at one another for a few moments without speaking.

Then Spotted Tail said, with stately dignity that befitted his high rank in his tribe:

"Yellow Bear has ridden far. He is tired and hungry, and his horse needs refreshment. He will tarry a while in the lodges of the Pawnees, and then he will take the trail homeward to his people."

Although he hated the Kiowa more, probably, than he did any man on earth, the chivalrous, old chief could not forget or neglect the laws of hospitality which are valued so highly in most of the Indian tribes.

But Yellow Bear was not in the mood to respond to his courteous offer in a like spirit.

"Pawnee!" he cried, fiercely. "There shall be no truce or peace between us. It shall be war—red war! The scalps of your warriors shall hang on the tent poles of the Kiowas, and the wailing of the squaws of your villages shall be heard in the land. The Rose of the Pawnees shall yet be my bride. I desire her, and what Yellow Bear desires, that he will have. Tell me, for the last time, will you give her to me now, or shall the hatchet be dug up?"

At this threat, several of the young Pawnee braves who were standing within earshot ran up, snatching their tomahawks out of their belts. They would have brained the haughty Kiowa, had not Spotted Tail waved them back, telling them that Yellow Bear was sacred from harm, as he had come to the village in peace as a guest.

"You have had your answer from the lips of Dove Eye herself, Kiowa," he said, turning to Yellow Bear, "and Spotted Tail would not change it even if he felt inclined—which he does not. If you will not eat or drink in our lodges—then go!"

With a savage look, the Kiowa turned on his heel and strode toward the spot where his horses and the string of pack-laden ponies he had brought with him as wedding gifts were standing.

He unhobbled the horse and mounted it. Then, leading the ponies by a lariat, he rode slowly away.

Some of the young braves started to jeer at him; but Spotted Tail, chivalrous as ever, silenced them with an angry command.



Several weeks passed.

Spotted Tail, wily in war, was prepared night and day for a Kiowa raid.

None came.

He began to believe that Yellow Bear had forgotten his infatuation, and had decided to wed some maiden of his own people.

Then, suddenly, the old chief of the Pawnees fell grievously sick, and the headship of the tribe devolved, until his recovery, upon a chief of younger age and lesser rank.

This man, Red Eagle, did not share Spotted Tail's belief that the Kiowas would dig up the hatchet. He had not seen the expression of Yellow Bear's face when he rode away from the village.

"The warriors must not remain in the village forever," he declared. "The tribe will need food in the winter. We must hunt the buffalo on the plains and jerk much meat for the lean and hungry months when the ground is hard bound with ice and snow. Let the young men make ready! We go to-morrow to hunt the buffalo."

Spotted Tail lay sick in his lodge, and knew nothing of the matter.

Almost the whole of the tribe went away on the buffalo hunt.

With the cunning of an Indian, Yellow Bear, the Kiowa, crept into the village while they were away.

At night, while most of the few Pawnees in the village were asleep, he seized Dove Eye and bore her away, bound fast on a horse stolen from the corral of the tribe.

Spotted Tail, sick though he was, soon discovered what had happened, and he followed on the trail with a swiftness inspired in almost equal degree by hatred and by love.

## CHAPTER II.

### BUFFALO BILL TAKES UP THE CHASE.

"Looks like a race for life, doesn't it, Sam?"

Two scouts, dressed in frontier garb and mounted on magnificent horses, reined up and looked at the strange scene that was presented to their gaze.

They had drawn up under cover of a clump of dwarfish pines, where they could see without being seen.

Far away, coming up a valley from the east, were three figures on horseback, riding at a terrific pace.

One of the scouts, a tall, handsome, commanding-looking man, unslung his field glass and got it into focus.

He looked what he was—a hero and a king of men. All

along the border his name was already a household word, for he was Buffalo Bill, the king of the scouts and knight of the plains.

By the aid of the glass, he was able to discover something of the character of the three figures who were riding so furiously.

Two of them rode side by side, several hundred yards in advance of the third.

The first was an Indian warrior who led by the bridle a second horse which carried an Indian maiden. Judging by her position, she seemed to be bound to her horse.

The third rider, who was lashing his horse furiously, was also an Indian brave.

Buffalo Bill turned, after he had taken a good look, and imparted this information to his companion—a small, wiry, agile scout whose face showed in equal measure good-humor and reckless daring.

"It looks like a race for life," the border king remarked. "Shall we take a hand in it?"

"What's the good?" said the other scout, who went by the nickname of Buckskin Sam. "If that was a white woman, of course we'd take a hand in it mighty sudden. But squaws aren't in our line, are they? Likely enough she is glad to be run off with. We don't know the rights of the case, and we might take the wrong side. Leave them to fight their own battles. It's not our funeral, and I don't see just what right we've got to butt in."

"I guess you're right, Sam," said Buffalo Bill.

Guiding his horse out of the cover of the pines, he rode down the hill toward the valley.

He had no idea of taking part in the affair, but out of a sporting instinct he wanted to see how it finished.

"Come along, Sam!" he cried.

"No; I don't take much stock in redskins," sang out Buckskin. "This is a pretty good place to camp, and I'll have some food ready for you, maybe, by the time you return."

Buffalo Bill laughed cheerfully and rode on, every now and then taking a peep through his glass at the position of the race.

The first warrior and the girl with him dashed on up the valley, and just as the border king reached the level the horse of the other Indian put its foot into a hole and fell, throwing its rider heavily against a huge boulder and leaving him senseless.

"He's out of the race for fair!" Buffalo Bill muttered. "From the way he's lying, it looks as if he's fractured his skull or broken his neck."



However, when he got to the side of the redskin, he found that he was conscious, though unable to rise to his feet.

He reined up his horse and jumped off to see what help he could give.

As he looked into the face of the Indian, he recognized him, even though his features were terribly distorted by pain and by the rage of failure.

"Why, Spotted Tail, how did this happen?" he exclaimed. "Why is the chief of the Pawnees in this plight, with none of his young men by his side to help him?"

The two men had fought together in several Indian campaigns, in which Buffalo Bill was the chief of scouts and Spotted Tail the leader of a Pawnee contingent in alliance with the whites.

The knight of the plains, of course, was ready now, as always, to help an old comrade.

"Yellow Bear, the chief of the Kiowas, has gone beyond my reach with Dove Eye, the Rose of the Pawnees."

Buffalo Bill whistled.

"That's the trouble, is it? And you were just on the point of catching him when your horse trod in a hole and flung you off."

The Pawnee nodded.

"Horse most dead," he said, briefly. "Spotted Tail got leg broken."

"I see. Well, Spotted Tail, my horse is fresh. I'll take up the chase, and I guess I can catch him and bring you back your daughter."

The old chief's eyes shone with gratitude.

"Long Hair is a great warrior. He will surely do it," he said.

"But what about you, old hoss?"

"Spotted Tail will lie here and die, if no aid comes. He cares not for that, so long as Dove Eye is rescued and taken back to her people, and Yellow Bear is punished for taking her away from me."

Buffalo Bill laughed merrily.

"You're grit right through, according to your own way of thinking, Spotted Tail," he said. "But there's no need for you to lie down and die this time. Can you manage to crawl up the hill? My camp is on the top, and Buckskin Sam is there. You know him, don't you? Well, he'll fix you up in elegant shape, and I hope I'll be back there before very long with your daughter."

Spotted Tail looked at him gratefully and promised to go. Then the border king mounted his horse and

rode at a hard gallop after Yellow Bear, who had by this time gained a very considerable lead.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE RESCUE OF DOVE EYE.

The Kiowa chief, glancing around, had seen the mishap that had befallen Spotted Tail, and, of course, it had given him the keenest delight. He did not see Buffalo Bill riding down the hill, and so he thought himself safe from pursuit. He, therefore, rode on at a more leisurely pace in order to save his horses.

"Is the Rose of the Pawnees tired?" he asked, hoping at last to get an answer from the girl's lips, for she had not spoken a single word since he took her captive.

The large, expressive, black eyes of the girl flashed a look of hatred into his face, but she did not speak.

"Dove Eye shall find her tongue by and by—or Yellow Bear will help her!" exclaimed the chief, savagely. "When she is in his lodge she will have to obey him and be humble, as befits a squaw, or it will go hard with her. The horse of Spotted Tail has given out, and Dove Eye need not hope to be rescued now."

As he said these words, the girl glanced back, and a cry of joy broke from her lips. She saw that a pursuer was behind them, and that he was gaining rapidly. At the first glance, she thought he must be her father who had mounted again, for she could not think that anyone but he was on the trail.

Yellow Bear, startled by her cry, turned his eyes back. He saw at once that the man who was coming after him so swiftly was not Spotted Tail, but a well-mounted and doubtless also a well-armed paleface.

In a few moments, as the rider drew nearer, he recognized him as the famous "Long Hair," who was already, even at that early period of border history, very well known to the tribes of the great plains. Yellow Bear had met him before in battle, and on that occasion had very narrowly escaped with his life.

Quickly he lashed his horse and that which bore Dove Eye into furious speed once more. It was dangerous speed, indeed, for the ground grew rougher and more rocky as they ascended the pass. But the Kiowa recked little of that, for there was a danger behind that was infinitely greater than the danger of the road.

Nearer and nearer the pursuer came, for he also rode over the rocky track with the most complete fearlessness.

A low, scornful laugh broke from the lips of the In-



dian maiden as she noted Yellow Bear's frantic but futile efforts to get away from the paleface, who was gaining on him so rapidly. She could now see plainly that the man in chase was not her father.

The Kiowa heard her laugh, and his face flamed with anger.

Reining up the horses, he resolved that she should first die, and then he would face his pursuer.

He clutched the girl by the arm and drew his scalping knife from his belt.

Raising it in the air, he held it poised above her breast. In another moment it would have been plunged into her helpless form and drained her life's blood.

As he thus raised his arm, the Kiowa gave vent to a frightful yell—a cry of defiance and of hatred.

Dove Eye, fearless and scornful, looked him straight in the eyes, expecting neither mercy nor rescue. She fully believed that that moment would be her last, but she was ready to meet death in a manner befitting the daughter of a great chief.

Suddenly Yellow Bear's arm fell and his knife dropped to the ground.

Buffalo Bill, more than a hundred yards away, had seen the girl's peril. Quick as thought, he raised his rifle, fired and sent the ball crashing through the elbow of the Kiowa, breaking the limb at the joint.

Unable to use either rifle or knife now, Yellow Bear uttered a cry of mingled pain and rage. He leaped from his horse and plunged into a thicket near by, where no horseman could follow him, just at the moment that Buffalo Bill dashed up to finish the work he had so well begun.

The knight of the plains stopped for a few seconds to make sure that the girl had sustained no harm.

"The Rose of the Pawnees need have no more fear," he said, cutting the thongs that bound her with his knife. "I will soon take her back to her father."

"Dove Eye has no words with which to thank the brave paleface," said the girl. "He has saved her life, and she will be his slave till death."

"We palefaces don't believe in slave women," said the scout, with a laugh, "and I don't want any thanks. I'm an old comrade of your father's, and naturally I'm always ready to fight his battles when he can't fight them himself. But look after my horse. I must go into the thicket, and try to run that skunk to earth."

He threw the reins of his horse into the hands of the

girl he had liberated, and then dashed into the thicket, rifle in hand, after the Kiowa.

Why had he not sent a bullet through the heart or the head of the savage instead of through his elbow joint?

Simply because he could think with lightning rapidity, just as he could act.

He knew full well that even a mortal wound would not check that descending arm. The Kiowa would have slain the girl, though in the very agony of death.

But a bullet placed where he had placed it through his wonderful skill with the rifle instantly paralyzed the savage and made him unable to strike the blow he had intended.

As Dove Eye saw the handsome, athletic figure of her preserver disappear into the chaparral, the light of new-born love shone in her lustrous eyes.

"He is braver than the bravest warrior of my people," she murmured to herself; "he is as handsome as the blue heron when it floats above the lake. Dove Eye will be his slave and his squaw, or she will not cook meat in the wigwam of any man."

She waited several minutes—which seemed long, indeed, for her—for the knight of the plains to reappear. At last he came out of the wood, flushed of face and clothing torn in several places by the thorns and the briars. There was a look of keen vexation on his face.

"Did you take the Kiowa's scalp?" the girl asked, eagerly. "I did not hear his death cry, and I see no scalp at your belt."

"White men don't take scalps," the border king explained. "At least, most of them don't, and I'm not one of the few who do. But, as a matter of fact, the skulking cuss got away from me. The wood was very thick, and he managed to cover his trail. I did not care to pursue him far or I might have caught him; but I was afraid he would double round me, get back here, and trouble you while I was looking for him in there."

The girl smiled her gratitude to the white man for this careful thought of her welfare. She knew very well that none of the braves of her own tribe would have stopped in the chase of an enemy for the sake of a woman.

"But I'll get the coward yet, sooner or later," Buffalo Bill went on, with a savage vehemence unusual in him. "I know the fellow well. He is Yellow Bear, the chief of the Kiowas. I promised your father that I would punish him, and so I will. True, he is punished already by a badly broken arm, but if he is allowed to stay on



top of the earth he will cause you more trouble, and very likely stir up a war between the Kiowas and the Pawnees in which we whites would have to take a hand, because your people have helped us more than once in our little affairs with the hostiles.

"But you are too tired to listen to all this, Dove Eye. Mount your horse and we will ride to my camp, where I expect we shall find your father."

Leading the captured horse of Yellow Bear by the bridle, the king of the scouts turned toward his camp, which he reached just as the sun was setting.

## CHAPTER IV.

### A FLIGHT FOR LIFE.

When Buffalo Bill got back to the place where he had left Spotted Tail, he found the old chief sitting on the ground near by, calmly smoking his pipe. He had tried to crawl up the hill to the camp, as his white friend had directed, but the effort had proved to be too much for him, with his broken leg, and he had, therefore, waited, being confident that the border king would vanquish Yellow Bear and return to him.

His eyes brightened with satisfaction when he saw that Cody was bringing Dove Eye along with him. He grunted his gratitude and wrung the hand of his friend warmly.

Then he looked at the belt of Buffalo Bill, and saw that there was no scalp in it.

"Ugh! I remember. You take no scalps. But you killed him?"

The old savage looked keenly in the eyes of the border king, who replied, not without some little embarrassment:

"No, I didn't, Spotted Tail. I did my best, but the luck was on his side, and he managed to get away. He was going to stab Dove Eye, and I broke his arm with a bullet because I knew that was the only way to prevent the knife from coming down."

Spotted Tail nodded. Experienced old warrior that he was, he thoroughly understood.

"Then the skunk got away into a thick wood, and I dared not follow him far, for I feared he might double back and kill Dove Eye, who was waiting outside."

Spotted Tail grunted approvingly.

"Long Hair is a great warrior and a wise man," he said. "All that he does is right in the eyes of his friend. No man could have done better. The Pawnees

are in debt to him for life. Whenever he calls, they will come to his help."

"You and your people couldn't be better friends than you have always been to me, old hoss," said Buffalo Bill. "I am only too glad to have been able to do you a service, and rescue your daughter from the hands of that brute."

"Would the great slayer of buffaloes like to have Dove Eye for his bride?" asked the old chief, in a matter-of-fact sort of way. "If he would, no doubt she would be willing; and the heart of Spotted Tail would be glad."

The knight of the plains smiled in an embarrassed way.

"That's very kind of you, Spotted Tail," he replied. "The man who gets Dove Eye for a bride will be very lucky, but that man cannot be me."

Dove Eye, whose face had lighted up at her father's words, turned away her head to hide a tear; but as she did so she murmured to herself:

"There is no warrior like him! Dove Eye must win his love or die."

Spotted Tail, with the courtesy natural to a well-bred Indian chief, hastened to change the subject. He, too, was sorely disappointed, but he was too proud to show it.

"Spotted Tail is not sorry that Yellow Bear has escaped, for he will now have a chance to take his scalp himself. As soon as his leg is better, he will take the trail. By that time Yellow Bear's arm will be better. We will meet on equal terms, but the Great Manitou will make me strong to overcome him."

"Well, then, we must start to make you well at once," said the border king. "I guess, if you don't mind a little pain, I can put that leg of yours in splints, and then you can manage to sit on Yellow Bear's horse somehow."

"Yes, Spotted Tail must be taken back to the lodges of his people. He is no good with this broken leg. We dare not tarry here, Long Hair, for it is less than a day's ride to the village of Yellow Bear."

"A day's ride only? Then, by thunder, that smoke means something!"

Buffalo Bill pointed to a thin cloud of black smoke which rose in the air lazily some miles away toward the west. It was barely visible in the twilight, but his keen eyes had noticed it.

The Indian looked in the direction in which he pointed.

"Yes," he said, "it is Yellow Bear speaking to his people. They may not see the signal, for the darkness is gathering quickly. But they may do so, and then they



would hasten to come to his help. Make my broken leg straight between pieces of wood and put me on the horse, so that we may get away. If we wait here long, we may have the Kiowas upon us like hungry wolves.

"If they come before I am ready to go," the old man continued, "take Dove Eye and gallop away. Leave me here, and care nothing. I am old, and I will show them that a Pawnee chief knows how to die. But my little Dove Eye must not become the squaw of Yellow Bear—his slave."

"That she will never be! She would rather die!" exclaimed the girl, proudly.

She knelt down by her father's side to aid Buffalo Bill to set the broken bone in her father's leg, and to put it into place with splints as well as he could under the circumstances.

With such skill as men almost always possess who have been brought up on the plains, the scout proceeded to place the broken limb into proper position, and then, with the long, silken scarf which he wore, cut into strips, he bound the splinters securely into place.

The chief must have endured great agony while this rough surgery was going on, but never once, either by groan or wince, did he show any sign of it.

Indian nature may be human nature, but anyone who has seen the marvelous fortitude with which the Indians will endure pain is rather inclined to doubt it.

Dove Eye calmly aided in the work, and she was, indeed, less nervous than the chief operator.

As soon as the surgical job was over, Buffalo Bill assisted the chief on to the horse which Yellow Bear had been forced to abandon. Then the three rode up the hill toward the camp, where the border king had left Buckskin Sam.

"Why does the white chief go this way?" asked the Pawnee. "Would it not be better to go up the valley, which is the way straight to the lodges of my people?"

"Yes, it would, Spotted Tail, but I've left a friend at my camp up here, and I must warn him and bring him along with us."

The chief nodded approval, and they kept silently on their way until they came to the camp.

Buckskin Sam had lighted a large fire, and was busily employed in cooking some deer meat.

"The fire must go out," said Spotted Tail at once. "If the Kiowas have come in answer to Yellow Bear's smoke signal, they will hasten to the fire at once, for they will judge that we will be around it."

"All the better!" exclaimed Buffalo Bill, gayly. "Pile on more wood, Buckskin. We will make it blaze up so that they can't help seeing it unless they have all gone stone blind."

"What does my brother mean?" asked Spotted Tail. "Does he mean to stay and fight them? Spotted Tail would like that, but there will be too many of them. We should all surely lose our scalps."

"No, I don't mean to fight," replied the border king. "I'm ready to fight against any odds when I have to, but I don't believe in doing it just for fun, and I don't believe in throwing my life away, either. No, what I mean is, that we will get down at once into the valley, and lure the Kiowas off the trail by bringing them up here."

"Ugh! Long Hair is a clever warrior."

As soon as the fire was blazing brightly, and there were enough logs on it to keep it alight for a long time, the border king led his little party down the slope to the valley, and they headed for the village of the Pawnees, which was distant more than two days journey.

Buffalo Bill noticed that his friend, Buckskin Sam, gazed with undisguised admiration at the Pawnee girl, and his words soon confirmed his looks.

"Cuss the luck, Bill!" he said, edging his horse alongside that of the border king. "Why didn't you let me save that girl? She's an angel, even if she is a red skin."

"Why were you too lazy to ride down the hill with me and see the fun? Then you would have had your chance. Sam, I believe you are in love with her."

"In love with her! Of course I'm in love with her! So would anybody be who had eyes in his head. She's a beauty—a queen—that's what she is. Oh! jumping polecats, does she understand English?"

"Of course she does—quite as well as you do." And Buffalo Bill laughed at his comrade's confusion, for Sam had spoken in a loud tone, and Dove Eye was easily within hearing. Her amused smile showed that she had both heard and understood; but she had no love to give the "Little Brave," as she rather condescendingly called Buckskin Sam.

They rode on for several hours, and then Spotted Tail, who had been enduring untold agonies from his leg for hours, was obliged to utter a faint groan. He was heartily ashamed of it the moment it had passed his lips, but Buffalo Bill had heard it, and he immediately called a halt.



"Let us go on—I am able to travel," Spotted Tail protested.

"Not so," said Buffalo Bill. "We all need food, your leg must be seen to and the horses will be none the worse for a rest. We will camp here. I think we are safe from pursuit by this time, for a while, at least, even if Yellow Bear managed to call his warriors to him, which is doubtful. There is a stream near by at which we can get water. Listen and you can hear it."

While the men unsaddled the horses, so that they could roll in the grass and thoroughly rest themselves, Dove Eye, with the ready willingness of an Indian girl, went to the stream and filled the canteens of the scouts. Returning, she would have led the horses there to drink, but this the white men would not permit. They did the job themselves, much to the astonishment of both Dove Eye and her father. They were not accustomed to the consideration and respect shown toward women by white men.

After halting for about an hour and making a meal off some jerked meat in the saddlebags—for it would have been unwise to light a fire—the border king gave the word to resaddle the horses, and they resumed their journey.

Before they had gone far they saw the lights of a camp fire ahead of them.

Approaching cautiously, they found that the encampment was that of a small surveying party, escorted by a detachment of twenty United States troopers.

## CHAPTER V.

### SURPRISED BY THE KIWAS.

Buffalo Bill rode forward boldly to the camp, but to his surprise he was not challenged until he came well within the circle of light cast by the camp fire.

Then came the sharp military command:

"Halt! Who goes there?"

"A friend."

"Advance, friend, and give your name."

Buffalo Bill did so, and he was at once warmly welcomed by the officer in command of the party, a young captain named Dick Boyd. He introduced Buckskin Sam, as well as Spotted Tail and his daughter, at whom the soldier cast admiring glances.

"Ugh! Spotted Tail not like sleep here to-night," muttered the old chief in the ear of Buffalo Bill. "Why do the white soldiers make big fires to call in all the hostiles on the plains to take their scalps? And, if they must

have such fires, why don't they keep watch? If I had been leading a party of Kiowas just now I could have rushed in and taken all their scalps without losing more than two or three of my men."

"Of course you could, chief; but what's the good of talking about it? I've talked to some of these young soldiers until I'm tired. They will never learn to have a proper respect for their enemy. Still, I will try what I can do with this young fellow. We may as well stay here for the night, and join forces with these soldiers. Then, if the Kiowas do come along after us, we ought to be able to give them a pretty good thrashing."

Buffalo Bill strolled over to the young officer, who was talking on the other side of the camp fire to Dove Eye and Buckskin Sam.

"I may as well tell you, sir," said the king of the scouts, "that it would be well for you to make an early start on whatever route you are taking, and to take pretty good care to hide your trail. Also, if I were you, I would put out the camp fire for the night, double the sentries, and put them all around the camp at some distance out."

The officer seemed annoyed by this advice.

"What do you mean?" he asked. "I do not see that there is any danger to be feared."

"It is simply this: The Kiowas are very restless, and their main village is not far away. It has been rumored for a long time that they are going to take the warpath against the Pawnees and the whites.

"Well, now matters have come to a head, I guess. I rescued this girl, Dove Eye, to-day from the head chief of the Kiowas—she is a Pawnee, you know—and now we rather expect that a big war party of Kiowas are after us. If they strike your trail, I need hardly tell you that they'll be likely to make a bid for your scalps, as well as for your horses and your weapons."

Capt. Boyd laughed.

He had had no experience of life on the plains, having just come out from an Eastern military post; and he thought that the king of the scouts grossly exaggerated the danger.

"I'm very much obliged to you for the warning," he said, "but I don't really think there is any serious danger. The Kiowas buried the hatchet a long time ago, and I hardly think they would dare to dig it up now, when we have such strong military posts scattered all over the plains. We are a strong and well-armed party,



and they would think more than twice before they attacked us."

Buffalo Bill repeated his warning and urged it as strongly as he could, but when he saw that he made no impression on the self-confident young soldier he turned away in disgust.

"We will camp near by them, but we will leave before morning," he said to Spotted Tail.

"Good! Long Hair knows best. The life of Spotted Tail is in his hands. That is nothing—he thinks more of his daughter. But he trusts Long Hair and the Little Brave."

"All right, chief, we'll take the best care of you that we can. No man can say more than that."

They rode on about a couple of hundred yards above the other camp, and then dismounted by the side of a stream.

Buffalo Bill unfastened the chief from his horse, to which they had been compelled to tie him. Buckskin Sam laid out blankets under a willow tree and put the old Pawnee upon them, aided by the border king. Dove Eye attended to the hobbling of the horses, and Cody gathered sticks and made a fire.

Spotted Tail spoke a word of warning about this, but the border king pointed to the other fires made by the soldiers and to the full moon which had just come up.

"The fire will add to our comfort," he said, "and it certainly will not increase our danger."

Dove Eye, with the housewifely instinct of the true Indian woman, at once began to cook some supper. Buffalo Bill took from his own stores some coffee and hung a small camp kettle full of water over the fire to boil.

After a meal had been eaten, the king of the scouts lay down to sleep, for he had arranged with Buckskin Sam to take the first watch. They meant to stand guard by turns all night.

The camp fires had burned low and all was quiet when Sam awoke the border king to take his turn on watch.

"Do they keep any watch over there?" Buffalo Bill asked, turning toward the other camp.

"None that I can see—none that's worth anything. I strolled over there a while ago, and I could have lifted the hair of any man sleeping in that camp if I had been a redskin. Such careless cusses deserve to have their hair lifted."

"They certainly do," said the border king, who had

been used, for the greater part of his life, to be more vigilant by night than by day.

"We shall have to make an early start," he added. "You won't have more than two or three hours sleep, Sam, so you had better drop on your blanket at once."

The scout took the hint, nothing loath, and Cody was left alone.

He went out at once to change the picket pins of the horses to a fresh grazing ground, so that they would have a good feed before morning, and thus be in a better condition to travel. The lives of all the party might depend upon their speed and endurance.

When he approached his own horse, the famous Powder Face, he found the animal with his forefeet planted close together, his head bent low until the nose was close to the ground and his ears pointed toward the west, with a tremulous quiver visible in both of them.

Buffalo Bill had seen the animal in this position three times before, and each time he had learned a lesson—the lesson that hostile Indians were on the point of making an attack.

"So there's danger in the wind, is there, old boy?" he said, going up to the horse and patting him.

The animal raised his head, and, looking out into the moonlight, seemed to watch for the appearance of an attacking party. Then he snuffed the air, as if he really scented a coming enemy.

Buffalo Bill was too wise in the craft of the plains to disregard these signals. He had complete trust in the sagacity of his horse.

Without pausing to look around and satisfy himself that there was really danger threatening, he at once took up the picket pins of all the horses and led them hastily to the camp where his friends were sleeping.

Buckskin Sam had not yet dropped off to sleep, and he sprang to his feet at once when he saw that the horses were being led in. He knew that it was a sign of danger.

"Saddle up, Sam—saddle up; I think the reds are pretty near."

Sam hastened to do as he was told.

"An hour's earlier start or so will do no harm, at any rate," he muttered. "To tell you the truth, Bill, I feel durned nervous so near to those fool soldiers who invite all the reds on the plains to come and take their scalps."

Spotted Tail and Dove Eye awoke on the instant in



response to Cody's low call, and in a few minutes the four were mounted and ready to start.

"Buckskin, lead the way, and be careful to keep in the shadow of the timber," said Buffalo Bill. "I will overtake you in a few minutes."

"Why should Long Hair stay behind?" asked Spotted Tail.

"I want to put out our fire and make a false trail," said the scout, as he rode off.

But in reality he had also a nobler purpose.

As he felt that danger was at hand, he could not go off and leave the other party unwarned of it.

So, the moment Buckskin rode on, followed by the others, the brave scout turned the head of Powder Face toward the camp of the soldiers.

The animal, for a wonder, seemed unwilling to go. Usually, it went as free as the wind whenever its rider turned its head in any direction; but now, clearly scenting danger, it obstinately turned its head and tried to follow the others on the outskirts of the woods.

Buffalo Bill, angry at this perverseness, drove in the spurs—a thing which he very rarely did, or had any need to do.

Startled by the unusual pricks, the horse bounded toward the camp.

At almost the same instant, the border king became aware that the very danger he had feared was upon him.

As the animal leaped forward, it nearly trod upon an Indian who was creeping forward through the long grass.

Buffalo Bill, in one rapid glance, saw not only this one, but a dozen more to left and right, all advancing slowly and silently to surprise the camp. Beyond question, they were only a few of the braves belonging to a large war party which was probably hemming the soldiers in upon all sides.

Lucky it was, in that moment of imminent danger, that the border king was a quick thinker and an equally quick actor.

In order to make sure the safety of Dove Eye, Spotted Tail and Buckskin Sam, he decided that he would ride in a direction directly opposite to that which they had taken, dash through the camp of the sleeping soldiers and strive to awaken them, and then, if possible, make good his own escape up the river, or by crossing it, so that he would throw the redskins off the trail.

With a wild yell of warning, he gave the rein to his horse and dashed forward, a revolver in either hand.

Several Indians rose up from the long grass to stop him. Some blazed off their rifles almost in his face, and others struck at him with their tomahawks, but missed him because of the great pace at which his noble horse was traveling.

Buffalo Bill fired right and left with his revolvers, and four of the men who tried to stop him went down.

As he passed through the camp he shouted:

"Up, boys! Fight for your lives! The reds! The reds!"

## CHAPTER VI.

### DOVE EYE GOES FOR HELP.

Hardly had these words left the lips of the border king when he became aware that another horse was close behind his.

Turning his head, with his revolver uplifted, ready to put a bullet through the head of some Kiowa brave, he saw that the rider was none other than Dove Eye.

She had left Spotted Tail and Buckskin Sam, and had ridden to join him.

He checked his horse for a moment, and she came up by his side.

"Ride, girl—ride as you never rode before!" he shouted to her.

At the same moment, he saw a dark mass of horsemen in front of him, and by their feathered head-dresses, showing plainly in the moonlight, he knew that the main body of the Indians were upon him.

"Turn—turn and follow!" he shouted to Dove Eye again.

He wheeled his horse directly to the left, into the thick reeds by the river bank.

Dove Eye obediently turned when he did. The two went crashing through the reeds and brushwood, and in a few moments both their horses were in the stream, swimming bravely for the other shore.

Behind him, Buffalo Bill could hear a terrible fire from the guns of the soldiers whom he had awakened just in time to make a fight for their lives. But they were greatly outnumbered, and the Indians had got in to close quarters before the alarm was given. The king of the scouts, well versed as he was in frontier warfare, hardly thought they could make a successful resistance.

But he had done all he could for them. If he had been alone, he would have joined them in the fight; but



he had to think first of the Indian girl who had attached herself so confidently to him.

The noise, the rush, the first heat of excitement, the fury of the battle—all these helped Buffalo Bill and Dove Eye to escape. With the sure instinct of a good scout, the border king had chosen the only feasible plan to get away. The river was soon crossed, and then, on their swift horses, they climbed up the bank and galloped across the plain on the other side. They had now at least a good chance of escape.

Buffalo Bill only paused for a second after crossing, to say to the Indian girl:

"Keep close to me—I shall keep cover and follow the river. If the redskins do not catch sight of your father and my pard, and kill or capture them, we shall be able to join them lower down."

"Dove Eye will follow Long Hair wherever he cares to lead. She is his slave."

The redskin girl turned her horse on the trail of the border king's and followed him without another word.

"Ha! what's that?" said Buffalo Bill, a little while later, as a wild, peculiar shout, followed by a succession of frightful Indian yells, smote upon his ears.

"It is my father's war cry. Spotted Tail is a prisoner in the hands of the Kiowas. He must be a prisoner. If he had been stricken, he would have given his death cry, and that was not it."

The girl had hardly said this when a loud shout in English came over the water, and Buffalo Bill recognized the voice of his comrade, Buckskin Sam.

"They have both been taken, I reckon," he said.

"Spotted Tail, my father, turned to look for Dove Eye, who was following on the trail of Long Hair. He has been captured. He will be a great prize to the Kiowas. He is a great chief. They will light the fire of torture for him, and also for the Little Brave, your friend."

Buffalo Bill's face was wrung by anguish. He had acted for the best—and this was the result.

But in a moment he pulled himself together, with a strong man's fortitude.

"Not if I know it!" he hissed, through clinched teeth, as he pulled up his horse. "I will go over there and save them—or die with them."

"You are but one, and they are very many," said the girl, sadly. "What can you do, though you are the greatest of warriors? You must try some other way, if you are going to save them."

"Right you are, little girl!" exclaimed the border

king, seeing, after the first heat of passion had passed, the folly of a direct attack. "Well, we will try what strategy will do.

"The Kiowas have evidently had things all their own way. Listen to their yells. They must have killed or captured all that party of soldiers, for the firing has stopped. Dove Eye, will you do exactly as I tell you?"

"Yes," she whispered, faintly.

"Then you must ride at once, while you can, down the river, under cover of the trees. Head for Fort Thompson. You know where it is, don't you? You will find the great white chief, Custer, there. Tell him what has happened, and guide him, with his soldiers, to this place.

"The Kiowas will probably camp here for a time, to celebrate their victory. If they don't, he can follow their trail.

"Now, go at once. Lose no time, for every minute may be precious. I will stay here and watch the Kiowas, and try to rescue my friend and your father."

The Indian girl hesitated, and looked pleadingly in the eyes of the border king.

"Do not send Dove Eye away from you," she murmured.

"Go, girl, and may the Great Spirit help you," said Buffalo Bill, firmly. "It is the only way."

The girl said nothing more.

Obediently she turned her horse's head, and rode forward along the course set out for her.

Buffalo Bill led his horse into the water and went some distance downstream, so that he would hide his trail.

Then, at a spot where there was hard, shelving rock that would leave no impression, he led his horse out, tied him up in the thick grass near by and listened intently to the sounds made by the Kiowas on the other bank.

His trained ear soon told him that they had taken some prisoners, for he could hear them talking, and he knew their language well. They seemed by what they said, to have achieved a complete victory, but to have lost a good number of men in winning it.

They were looking for other prisoners, riding up and down the river bank. Some of them even crossed to his side, and he had to lie close under cover and keep his horse quiet while they searched vainly.

He knew that Yellow Bear would cause a keen and enduring hunt to be made when he found that neither



Dove Eye nor himself was among the slain or the prisoners. He would not rest satisfied with his victory until he had them in his power.

If Dove Eye's trail were taken, nothing but the fleetness of her horse would save her, for she would have to travel over an open country for more than half a day after she left the river. Then she would strike into a range of wooded hills, where she would have a good chance of hiding her trail. On the level plain it would be impossible for her to hide, and equally impossible for her to avoid leaving a track that could be easily followed by the Kiowas, if they once happened to strike it.

Buffalo Bill grieved for the danger which the girl would have to encounter, but his conscience was easy, for he knew full well that her peril would have been even greater had he allowed her to stay with him.

As for the terrible risks which he was running in the effort to save his friends, he cared little for those. They came in the day's work of his adventurous life, and he was used to them by long years of experience.

## CHAPTER VII.

### BUCKSKIN SAM DEFIES HIS CAPTOR.

Buffalo Bill had been right in supposing that both Spotted Tail and Buckskin Sam had been captured.

They had turned back to see what had become of Dove Eye, who had suddenly disappeared; and they had been surrounded near the camp of the soldiers by nearly a dozen redskins.

Spotted Tail, with his broken leg, could do little to defend himself, and was easily taken captive.

As for the white scout, he put up a strong fight, and sent more than one redskin to the happy hunting grounds; but he was knocked on the head by the butt of a gun from behind and stunned.

When Buckskin Sam came to his senses, and found that he was a captive in the hands of the Kiowas, he glanced swiftly around. His first emotion was one of satisfaction at finding that Buffalo Bill was not among the prisoners.

The party of soldiers had been slain, and their scalps were hanging at the belts of the Kiowas. But they had not died unavenged, for more than a score of dead Indians lying upon the ground, to say nothing of a number of wounded ones in the party, testified to the desperate nature of the resistance that had been made against overwhelming odds.

There appeared to be only three prisoners, so far as Buckskin Sam could make out—himself, the Pawnee chief, Spotted Tail, and Capt. Dick Boyd, the leader of the soldiers with the party.

A big fire was kindled near the scene of the fight, and the three prisoners were brought together. Then, for the first time, Buckskin Sam knew into whose hands he had fallen.

A Kiowa chief, past middle age, tall, stalwart and imposing in his bearing, with his right arm bound up in a sling, advanced to the place where Spotted Tail and his two white companions stood.

"Dog of a Pawnee! Do you know me?" he asked.

"Yes, Kiowa snake, I know you," was Spotted Tail's fearless retort. "You are Yellow Bear, the thief who stole my child, Dove Eye, away from me in the night, not daring to face me. But Long Hair, the great white chief, my friend, broke your arm and prevented you from slaying her; and now he has carried her safely back to her people."

"You lie, Pawnee! She is still out on the plains, and my young men shall take up her trail with the dawn. She shall be brought back here to see her father die, howling for mercy. Then she shall be the squaw of Yellow Bear."

"Never! Don't you think that is going to happen, you durned red traitor and thief!" cried Buckskin Sam, who was as careless of life as the Pawnee himself. "Dove Eye will never enter your wigwam or become your wife. She is safe with the best man that ever pulled a bead on a redskin—and that's Buffalo Bill, or Long Hair, as you call him."

"What paleface dog are you, that you dare to bark so loudly at the chief of the Kiowas?" demanded Yellow Bear, almost beside himself with anger.

"I'm the pard of Buffalo Bill—and his bite is worse than my bark. You know that pretty well, I reckon. You learned it when you got that arm of yours broken."

The Kiowa chieftain's face grew livid with fury, and he half drew his tomahawk from his belt, as if he were minded to launch it at the head of the dauntless captive who dared thus to beard him.

Then he thought better of it. That would be too easy a death for such a hated foe to die.

"Ugh! You are the friend of the paleface who took my Dove Eye away from me. So be it! I will make you eat fire after I have eaten my breakfast."

"Pile in, old yellow face! I don't care for any of your



tortures. I've killed about a hundred redskins of your kind in my time—and a good many of them belonged to your own tribe, too. I reckon that thought will comfort me a bit when you tie me up to the stake."

The Kiowa chief looked more angry than before at this renewed defiance, but he turned away without another word, and spoke to Capt. Boyd.

"And who are you?" he asked. "Are you, also, another friend of Long Hair?"

"You may be sure I am," was the response. "I was the captain of the soldiers you surprised. Now, I suppose, I'm nothing but your prisoner."

"Are you a friend of Spotted Tail?"

"No, I never saw him before we met him—which was just before you attacked us."

"What were you and your paleface soldiers doing in the hunting grounds of the red men?"

"We were only passing over them, to fulfill a command given to us by the Great White Father. We have not warred on the red man. Why, then, has he warred on us?"

"Because Yellow Bear hates the palefaces," the Kiowa chief said, in a tone of concentrated passion. "He would like to sweep them away as the red fire sweeps the grass from the plains."

"Yellow Bear cannot do that," replied the American officer, scornfully. "He may try as he will, but he will find that the white men are as many as the leaves on the trees, and that they are rooted as firmly as the pines of the mountains."

"It matters not," declared the Indian, fiercely. "The winter of the red man's hate shall wither them, even if they are as the leaves on the trees. The fire of his anger shall burn them, even if they are rooted like the pines in the mountains."

"Yellow Bear hates the palefaces, and he has always hated them. The scalps of many of them hang upon the pole of his wigwam. He has new ones here in his belt. He will have many more before he goes to the happy hunting grounds of the Great Manitou."

"The young soldier brave may get ready to sing his death song as soon as he gets to the village of Yellow Bear. He shall go from there to the spirit land in company with Spotted Tail, the Pawnee dog. As for this other paleface, he shall die at sunrise, and Yellow Bear will see to it that his death is not swift or easy."

As he said this, the Kiowa glared fiercely at Buck-

skin Sam, who bore his glance with the greatest possible composure.

"All right, Yellow Bear, bring on your tortures just as soon as you like," he retorted. "I'm sure I'll be glad to get out of your company, even if I have to pay the price of death to do so."

Yellow Bear made no reply. He simply stalked over to a group of several of his braves and ordered them to plant a stake in the open plain and to gather fagots and dry brushwood, so that all might be ready for the torture.

At the same time he had parties sent out to search for Buffalo Bill and Dove Eye, whom he had little doubt he would be able to catch, sooner or later, for he had not yet, in spite of his experiences with him, fully realized the ability of the king of the scouts.

The stake of torture was soon set firmly in the ground and the fuel heaped all around it.

As soon as the first streaks of dawn showed over the rim of the eastern horizon, Buckskin Sam, tightly bound with rawhide thongs, was led to the spot where he was to be sacrificed on the wings of fire.

The brave scout, much to the disappointment of the Kiowas, showed not the slightest trace of fear.

He replied to the taunts and insults of the redskins by telling them that they were squaws who could not fight in battle, but could only torture a helpless prisoner. He boasted of the braves of their tribe whom he had slain and left upon the plains for the coyotes and the wolves.

This angered the Kiowas so much that they could hardly restrain themselves from killing him on the spot, instead of waiting for the hour of torture, which had been appointed by their chief.

This, of course, was what the scout desired.

He would rather have died quickly by the blow of a tomahawk or the stab of a knife, than have waited to perish by the lingering and terrible agony of fire.

But Yellow Bear had spoken his doom, and he was a great chief whom the warriors dared not disobey. They held back their weapons, and simply glared at him and cursed him when he repaid their taunts with interest.

He was bound to the post and the fagots were heaped all around him.

The light of the coming day grew stronger and stronger.

The sun would soon rise in all its red glory above the rim of the horizon, and then the torture would begin.

Spotted Tail and Capt. Boyd had been brought out to



see their fellow prisoner die, and realize what their own fate soon would be.

They, too, showed no trace of fear.

The Pawnee chief looked with pride on the bound man, who so fearlessly defied his enemies when on the very verge of a terrible death. It was just the kind of conduct he appreciated—no Indian chief, trained for long years with that very end in view, could have done better.

As for the young officer, his only emotions were pity for the man about to die and rage at the thought of his own impotence to save him. If his hands had been free, he would cheerfully have fought the whole band of Kiowas in a wild effort to rescue Buckskin Sam.

Sam paid no heed to his two fellow prisoners. He was wondering whether Buffalo Bill and Dove Eye had managed to elude the Kiowas sent in pursuit of them. Even at that terrible moment, the thoughts of the unselfish scout were of others, not of himself.

The Kiowa warriors formed a circle round the stake, and began the dance of torture and the song of triumph, wheeling round and round with wild gyrations.

One brave stood near the post with a lighted brand in his hand, and as the others circled round he shook it savagely in the face of the prisoner.

Brighter and brighter grew the light of day. In the east the sky was all aglow with the red reflection from the sun now nearly up.

Yellow Bear stalked slowly and proudly into the circle, which parted to admit him.

His face expressed his deep hatred, though he tried hard to maintain a look of cold and proud dignity.

"The dog of a paleface who is so proud of being the friend of Long Hair is now about to roast in the fire which my young men have kindled," he said.

"Burn away," replied the scout, with an assumed calmness which he did not quite feel, now that the dreaded hour of trial and torture had come. "Don't spend a year in talking about it."

"The Father of Light has risen," said the chief, sternly, looking toward the east. "Let the fire eat up the life of the paleface dog."

Gladly obeying the command, the brave with the torch bent down to set fire to the fagots piled all around the base of the stake.

Before he could touch them with the flame, a shot rang out and a bullet pierced his brain.

Next moment a man mounted on horseback and lead-

ing another horse by the bridle dashed into the ring of yelling demons.

Before they could fully realize what was happening, Buckskin Sam had been cut loose from the stake, and was mounted upon the spare horse.

It was Buffalo Bill who had appeared so suddenly, like a bolt from the blue, and rescued him!

Quick as thought, he passed a revolver into Sam's hand; and as they put spurs to their horses he used the other which he possessed to such good advantage on the crowd of redskins all around that a way was cut through the circle and out on to the open plain.

The two scouts left six or seven dead warriors in their trail, and the rest—Yellow Bear among the number—were too dazed by the suddenness of the attack to think of immediate pursuit, or even of firing on the rescued man and his rescuer until both were out of range.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### PUNISHING THE PURSUERS.

Buffalo Bill was riding his famous gray horse, on which he had once ridden a race "scalp for scalp" against a Pawnee chief, and beaten him. Buckskin Sam had his own steed, Black Hawk, and his own rifle again in his hands, for it had not been taken from the saddle.

When the king of the scouts, crossing the river, came upon the horses fastened in the edge of a grove, he saw and secured the steed of Buckskin Sam to aid him in the bold attempt to save him.

"Let us get away down the river, pard!" shouted Sam, as they swept beyond rifle shot of the Kiowas, who were now mounting their horses to pursue. "I guess that will be our best chance, won't it?"

"We can't do it, Sam," replied Buffalo Bill. "Dove Eye has gone along that road to carry word to Custer and the men in the fort. She is going to bring them up to our help, and to punish these Kiowas. We must not put them on her track.

"Our horses are good—far better than any of theirs, I reckon. We can lead them all day, if we like; and pick off the nearest, now and then, at long range. We'll bear off to the northwest, and I guess they'll all follow us, and then none of them will take her trail."

Buckskin Sam approved heartily of this clear-headed plan of the king of the scouts.

"That's good, Bill," he said. "You certainly are the man to fix things up in good shape. I thought my last



moment had come when that red devil bent down to set fire to the wood."

"You had got to close quarters, and I knew that if I didn't drop him at once and then charge in on the rest, I wouldn't be able to save you. It was touch and go. We got out of it a great deal better than I expected we would."

The two men were riding at the top speed of their horses, all this time, in a direction exactly opposite to that which had been taken by Dove Eye on her journey to warn Custer. As they looked back, they saw that apparently the whole band of Kiowas had started in pursuit of them.

But they had a long start, and they could afford to slacken the speed of their horses, so that they would not tire them out too quickly.

Before they had ridden more than two or three leagues, they were obliged to change their course more toward the north, for the quick eye of Buffalo Bill saw a fresh body of mounted men approaching from the west. They were far off, but he could make out that they were redskins, and he suspected that they were another party of Kiowas coming to join their chief in his sudden campaign against the palefaces.

This alteration, of course, took them from the direct line to the hills far distant over the prairie. Buffalo Bill had hoped to follow this line and reach the hills at dusk. Then, aided by the numerous water courses there, they could have hidden their trail during the night, and got clear away from their pursuers.

The appearance of the second party had spoiled this plan, and it would now be a question of endurance and speed between the hunted whites and their numerous pursuers.

The scouts rode steadily onward, their noble horses still fresh and strong. As they left mile after mile behind them, the more scattered became the line of redskins trailing along after them.

At noon Buffalo Bill and Sam halted to water their horses in a stream that flowed down, cold and clear, from the hills to the west. Not more than a dozen of the Kiowas who had started after them in the early morning were still in sight. The pace had been too great for the rest, and they had fallen hopelessly behind.

"We've done the trick all right, Sam," said Buffalo Bill. "We can afford to take it easier from now on. We don't want to get too far away from this Kiowa gang, for we still have the duty placed upon us of rescuing Spotted

Tail and Capt. Boyd. I wish it had been possible to save them when I came in and got you, but it was out of the question. We only got away by the skin of our teeth as it was, and if we had waited for them we should simply have thrown away our lives without helping them. I had thought it all out and concluded that the only thing to do was to come back for them as soon as possible."

"You were quite right, Bill; there's no question of that," replied Sam. "But I don't think they are in any immediate danger. I heard Yellow Bear say that they were to be taken to his village, and there put to death by torture. He wants to show them off to the squaws and the old men as samples of his prowess."

"That's good news!" exclaimed the border king. "I hope we'll be able to save them before that happens. We can just use up these few redskins in sight at long range, and then keep at any distance we choose from the rest until Dove Eye brings Custer and the boys up to deal with them."

"Do you think she will carry the news all right?" Buckskin Sam asked.

"I'm as sure of it as I am of my own existence," replied Buffalo Bill, in a tone of the most absolute confidence. "I would trust that girl with anything. Unless she is killed or captured, which is not likely now that we have drawn the Kiowas off her trail, she will get the message through.

"That girl is like lightning when she rides. When I told her to go this morning, while I stayed behind to look after you and her father, she just went off like a streak. I never saw better riding in my life."

"All right, pard. Then I reckon we'll come out of this business top-side. We can take off these few that are following now without leaving the stream, I guess."

"We might be able to do so, but we had better draw them a little further on. If any turn back, we might lose 'em. Let us keep on and see if we can find some cover. Then we will let 'em come so near that not a single red can get away when we begin to throw our lead."

"Right again, Bill! You've got the clearest head of anybody on these plains."

"Don't talk rot, Sam! Come on, and let's try to find that cover. They are coming too near."

The two men mounted their horses again, and set them to the gallop, soon leaving the redskins behind. They rode on for another league, and then they came to a country rather more broken, with here and there a few scattered rocks and sage brush.



It was not long before they found the cover they were seeking—an ideal spot where they might make a stand against a superior force.

It was a clump of rocks, among which grew a lot of sage brush.

They halted and dismounted, letting their horses nibble at the grass while they waited for their pursuers to come up.

When they came within very long range, the scouts saw that there were but seven of the Kiowas left, and these came along slowly, as if their horses were dead tired.

Buckskin Sam swore a round frontier oath.

"I wish there were a score of the varmints, now that we have such good cover to fight them from," he growled, as the seven drew nearer and nearer, carefully following the trail of the fugitives whom they could no longer see.

"Don't be so greedy, Sam," laughed the border king. "Seven will do pretty well for a start. We can get some more later on, no doubt; and Custer's men will make the whole tribe wish they had never dug up the hatchet."

All seven of the warriors were now within easy range, but the two scouts held their fire. They wanted to get them so close that not one of the party would have a chance to get away when they started to open fire.

They were waiting, too, to see whether any more would heave in sight.

When the first brave was within sixty or seventy yards, and the hindmost not more than three hundred yards away, Buffalo Bill quietly asked Sam if he was ready.

"Yes, pard. Which one shall I take?" was the reply.

"The nearest. I'll drop the lazy cuss in the rear. We must shoot pretty quick, or they will try to rush us."

"All right, Bill."

"Fire when you hear the click of my gun."

The king of the scouts took a quick aim, and next second sent his bullet through the head of the hindmost of his enemies.

Almost at the same moment Buckskin Sam picked off the nearest Indian, who was now almost up to the clump of rocks behind which the scouts had taken cover.

The rest of the redskins, surprised at the suddenness of the attack, made the fatal mistake of halting in dismay for a moment, and so they threw away their one chance of life, which consisted in a sudden rush.

Shot after shot, as quick as lightning flashes from a storm cloud, flew from the ready rifles of the scouts, and in a much briefer space of time than it takes to tell the

pursuit had ended in the death of every one of the pursuers.

The last three braves who survived tried to make a dash, but they were shot down before they could reach the rocks behind which their terrible antagonists were crouching.

Seven warriors lay dead upon the ground, and their seven ponies, free at last from the lash of their cruel masters, turned away to rest and to graze.

## CHAPTER IX.

### DOVE EYE'S HEROIC RIDE.

Dove Eye, the Rose of the Pawnees, had given her heart to Buffalo Bill, all unknown to that modest knight of the plains.

If he had been aware of the fact—which she had done her best to make plain—he would have done his best to discourage her, for his own heart was given to another—a white girl.

When she thought that he cared nothing for her, her heart was too heavy to care at all about her own peril. But the knowledge that his life might depend on her own efforts, now that he had ventured back to the Kiowa camp to rescue her father and his comrade, nerved her to ride as she had never ridden before.

With her Indian training, she knew that the success of her mission depended upon her getting a good start, unseen, and therefore she did not spare her horse during the remaining hours of the night, after she had parted from Buffalo Bill.

The animal might be used up in the morning, but she could then, most probably, afford the time to give it a rest.

She crossed several streams safely, and had ridden more than three leagues before the rosy light of the coming day—the same light that was to have been the signal for Buckskin Sam's death—began to make the objects of the countryside clearly visible.

Now, as she well knew, her real peril was beginning. It was almost certain that Yellow Bear would have sent out parties of his warriors to look for her and for Buffalo Bill, and in the clear light of early day objects could be seen over those plains for leagues by the keen-eyed redskins.

Not even daring to look round to see if she was followed, she sped on for fully an hour over the plain.

Then she reached a little knoll, and halted there to take



a good look around the horizon, for she knew that she could see further from that little elevation than from the level of the plain.

She took one eager look, and it was enough to tell her of her deadly peril.

Men were on her track!

They were very far in the rear, but she could count fully twenty horsemen scattered out on the plain. Of these, at least half were in column and following her trail.

The impulse of most women would have been to shake out the horse's rein at once and apply the whip, but Dove Eye was an Indian maiden well trained in all the craft of the Indians, and she knew too much to do that.

A long and cruel race was going to begin, and she must have her steed in good shape to stand the ordeal.

She calmly waited for a few minutes to let the animal rest and graze. She was well used to riding the wild horses of the prairie bareback, and she had no need of saddle or bridle. Swiftly, she removed those encumbrances, and, carrying only her rifle in her hand, she jumped on the back of the horse and darted off at full speed.

On—on, she went over a treeless plain, with only here and there a small knoll to break up its deadly monotony, and to hide her for a brief while from her pursuers.

The brave girl rode forward until a small lake came in sight, with a little timber around its verge.

Here she halted again for several minutes to water her horse and take a long, refreshing drink herself.

Owing to her two halts, her pursuers had gained on her considerably, and she could now make them out very distinctly.

Only six were now in sight, but they seemed to be very well mounted, and they kept close together.

But when, with her horse rested and refreshed, she once again started, the wisdom of her action was at once apparent.

Her horse had gained renewed vigor, and she slowly dropped her pursuers behind.

Now, with all the cool cunning of an experienced warrior, she let the noble animal do as it liked. She did not urge it to its full speed, but let it go along at a fair pace.

She felt sure that she would keep on ahead of her pursuers and reach the point for which she was aiming—a range of tree-clad hills behind which she could strike either for the fort of the white soldiers or for the range of her own people, as circumstances might dictate. Then, if

the Kiowas still followed her, they would be going to their doom.

Her heart grew light and glad. Surely, she thought, if she carried out Buffalo Bill's mission successfully through so much peril, the heart of that king of men would turn toward her and he would smile lovingly upon the Indian maiden.

Alas! Dove Eye did not know that the knight of the plains had given his heart to another, to whom he would be constant and true.

The horse flew on, apparently still strong, while the hot sun rose higher and higher, passing the meridian.

Presently she looked back and she became aware that she had not yet by any means shaken off her pursuers.

They also had evidently waited by the lake to refresh and rest their horses, and now they were coming on at a greatly increased pace.

Nearer and nearer came the hills toward which she was riding, and the ground became more and more broken.

With all the skill of a splendid rider, the girl got the best she could out of her horse, while at the same time sparing him as much as possible.

When she came to a level stretch she pressed him on at top speed, but when she came to broken or rising ground she let him go slowly, so that he would not be winded.

Spotted Tail would have been prouder than ever of his beautiful child had he known how nobly she was striving to bring help to him and to his friends—though the one dominating thought in her mind, of course, was to help and obey the man she loved.

At last Dove Eye felt, to her dismay, that her horse was weakening badly. She had ridden him hard during the night, and had only given him two very brief rests. Noble animal though he was, the strain was too much for him.

She could feel his legs trembling beneath him even when she walked him up the steeper ascents of the broken and rising ground.

She looked behind and saw that her six pursuers were still together, and that they had come very much nearer and were gaining rapidly.

Her heart was wrenched with agony—not with the fear of death, for her nature was too brave for that; but with the fear that she would be unable to carry out the command of the hero whom she loved.

She lashed her horse now for a final effort. She must reach the wooded slopes of the hills, where she might manage to hide herself from the men who pursued her.



She would gain the woods before they did, or she would kill her horse in the attempt.

Her pursuers were now near enough to see her frantic efforts to spur on the horse, and they knew that he was failing. They were as determined to prevent her from getting away as she was to escape.

Their shrill yells reached her ears. Though she knew no fear of death, her heart was maddened at the thought of failing in her mission.

Her splendid horse seemed to feel all that she did, and he did his best. He went leaping on, but with staggering bounds as if every one would be his last.

The trees on the slopes to which Dove Eye was madly straining loomed ever nearer and nearer.

On—on—on. There was only a mile more to be covered to the goal, but the horse was on the point of death. Though black as night in his native hue, he was now white with foaming sweat.

Staggering at every leap, the noble animal still went on, until he was within five hundred yards of the desired cover.

Then, suddenly, there was the crack of a rifle, and the horse collapsed beneath the girl, throwing her violently to the ground.

One of the Kiowas had come near enough to take a good aim, and his bullet had sped truly.

It had pierced the heart of the horse that had struggled so nobly, and now the animal lay dead, almost within reach of the goal.

Fiendish yells of triumph broke from the lips of the Kiowas, who thought that their prey was at last well within their grasp.

The heroic girl, however, was determined to make one last effort for life and freedom.

She staggered to her feet, her head swimming from the violent blow she had received when she fell, and, with her rifle in her hand, she turned to face her foes.

## CHAPTER X.

### IN THE HANDS OF THE APACHES.

When she found that her hope of escape was cut off, Dove Eye turned to bay as fiercely as any tigress bent on defending her cubs.

With her rifle in her hand, she waited calmly until the yelling Kiowas came well within range. Then, with a true and steady aim, she shot the foremost through the

head, and he reeled from his saddle and lay still upon the plain.

The brave girl had no time to reload her gun, which, unluckily, was not a repeater; but she had still a slight chance of escape.

The horse of the man she had killed, freed from its burden, came bounding on well in advance of the others.

As it was passing her she caught it by the bridle, and in an instant had bounded upon its back.

Quick as thought, she resumed her flight; but she had hardly started to do so before she was again brought to a full stop.

A bullet from the rifle of one of the pursuing braves struck her new horse in the side, and she was again brought heavily to the ground.

In an instant she was on her feet.

Clubbing her empty rifle, she turned to do battle to the death against the enemies of her father, her lover and her people.

She had not the slightest thought of surrender, and the Kiowas were so close upon her that her death appeared certain.

Suddenly, out of the wooded slopes near by, arose the fierce war whoops of other Indians.

Surprised and terrified, the Kiowas reined in their horses.

It was a fatal move.

While they hesitated, a rain of arrows and rifle balls hurtled through the air upon them, and the astonished girl saw her enemies fall from their saddles in the agonies of death.

There was not one of them who was not struck several times, either with arrow or with bullet.

Dove Eye turned to see from whom this unexpected help had come.

Alas! She saw nothing that would comfort her.

They were not the people of her own tribe.

Riding out from the trees to scalp the braves they had just slain, she saw by their bright-colored serapes, their long bows and longer lances that they were Apaches—those American Arabs dreaded by all the other Indian tribes because of their habit of warring with all whom they met.

But Dove Eye had little time for thought.

A score of painted warriors dashed past her to tear the scalps from the heads of the slain, while as many more surrounded her, eagerly asking questions in a tongue which she could not understand.



She faced them all fearlessly, for she was the daughter of a great chief, and she had been trained from youth to never show the faintest trace of alarm, even if she felt it.

Most of the Apaches were impressed by her bold bearing, and their questions were couched in a respectful tone; but there was one who was an exception to this rule.

He was a huge and hideous wretch, with a face that was remarkable for its cruelty and brutality, even for a redskin.

He laid his hand heavily upon Dove Eye's shoulder, but she hurled him back with an indignant strength that brought cries of admiring wonder from the other braves.

Maddened by the disapproval of his comrades, the bully snatched a knife from his belt and raised it to strike.

Dove Eye, with a look of scorn in her eyes, folded her arms to receive the cowardly blow.

Before it could descend, a noble looking young warrior, wearing the plumes and turban of an Apache chief, darted forward and caught the arm of the savage.

Wrenching the knife from him and throwing it to the ground with the right hand, he at the same time dealt him a fearful blow full in the face with the left, which stretched him senseless on the ground.

The young chief turned to speak to Dove Eye, after spurning the coward with his foot.

The other braves fell back respectfully, and it was evident that the handsome stranger must be a very great man in his tribe, indeed.

"Does the beautiful maiden speak the rough tongue of the palefaces of the north?" he asked.

"I do," Dove Eye replied, "and I thank you, chief, for saving me from that coward."

"He was a dog who needed a lesson," said the Apache, looking with contempt at the prostrate form. "Who are you, maiden?"

"Dove Eye, daughter of Spotted Tail, chief of the Pawnees."

"Ha! You are she whom they call the Rose of the Pawnees. Strong Hand, the Panther of the Apaches, has heard much of you from men of his tribe who have wandered to the lodges of the Pawnees. Strong Hand has no love for the Pawnees—they are too friendly with the palefaces. But Strong Hand's heart is tender toward Dove Eye."

"If you are Strong Hand, I have heard of you," said the girl. "You are a great brave, whose deeds are in the mouths of the story tellers of all the tribes on the great

plains. Strong Hand would not make war upon a woman."

"No! Strong Hand would make love to a woman. You are very beautiful—more beautiful than any maiden in the lodges of the Apaches. Strong Hand will make you his wife."

The young warrior calmly folded his arms and looked at the girl, as much as to say:

"Enough said—this settles it."

The Indian maiden looked troubled, but only for a moment. Then she raised her eyes fearlessly to his and said, boldly:

"It cannot be, Apache! Dove Eye has given her heart to another."

"Strong Hand is a great warrior," observed that worthy, calmly, with the absence of modesty natural to most Indians.

"Dove Eye knows that," said the girl, eager not to offend him more than was needful. "Strong Hand's fame is as bright as the stars, and the tribes tremble at his name—but Dove Eye cannot take him for a husband, for she has given her heart into the keeping of another."

"What matters that?" said the Apache. "Dove Eye will change her mind. Strong Hand will not hurry her. He will wait, and when she sees how great a warrior he is she will desire him for her husband."

"Dove Eye needs no time to think," responded the girl. "She has made up her mind. But now she has no time to think of love. She has something else to think of."

"Her father, the great chief, Spotted Tail, is a prisoner in the hands of the cruel and treacherous Kiowas. Dove Eye escaped from them last night when they raided the party in which she and her father were traveling. She was on her way to get help to rescue him, and the Kiowas followed. She slew one of them when her horse had fallen. Then Strong Hand and his braves came and killed the rest."

"The eyes of Strong Hand saw the deed," exclaimed the chief, in a tone of fervent admiration, "and his heart said within him, 'Now at last my eyes have seen a woman who is worthy to be the wife of a great chief.'"

"Dove Eye does not care for life or love if her father perishes by fire at the hands of the Kiowas."

"He shall not," said the young chief, eagerly. "Where are they now?"

"In the great gap of the big mountains to the west, near to the place where the River of Storms has its birth."

"Strong Hand will go there, with a large force of his



warriors, and he will take Spotted Tail out of the hands of the Kiowas and lift many of their scalps. Then will he come back to Dove Eye and bring her her father and say, 'Lo! I have done a good deed for you. Be now my wife.'"

Dove Eye made no answer to this very fair and generous suggestion—for an Apache chief to make.

She did not dare to say no, and she would not say yes. Neither did she dare to tell the young warrior that the famous Long Hair was trying at that moment to release her father, and that the king of the scouts was far dearer to her than Spotted Tail, or life, or anything else.

Strong Hand naturally took her silence for consent. He continued:

"Near by here, in the forest, we have a great camp, made strong as the palefaces make theirs. Thither you shall be taken by a small guard, who will treat you with the respect due to one who is to be the bride of Strong Hand. Strong Hand will take the rest of his warriors and attack the Kiowas so that he may rescue the father of the beautiful Dove Eye."

The Pawnee girl was helpless. She could not ask for any further favor. But at least she would risk one plea. She asked that she might ride with him to the attack on the Kiowas, hoping by that means that she might fall in with Buffalo Bill and her father, and some means of rescuing her from her new and most unpleasant predicament be devised by them.

The chief hesitated. He would have liked the girl to come with him, for he had already fallen deeply in love with her, but his better judgment told him that it would not be wise.

"No, that must not be," he said at length, in a decided tone that admitted of no argument. "The Apaches will travel very fast, and the fight at the end may be a desperate one. The Rose of the Pawnees is a fragile flower. She must go to the camp to rest."

The Indian maiden, used to the authoritative ways of men, knew that remonstrance would be absolutely useless. Her words would be wasted. So she bowed her head, and when a horse was brought to her, she mounted it without a word and rode slowly away, under the guard of three Apache braves who had been assigned to that duty by their chief.

As soon as he saw her headed toward the camp, Strong Hand gave a signal to the rest of his warriors, and they formed into column behind him and traveled at an easy canter in the direction of the Kiowa encampment.

## CHAPTER XI.

### BUFFALO BILL CLIMBS A TREE.

Buffalo Bill and Buckskin Sam, when they fled from the Kiowa band, had no intention of leaving the neighborhood altogether.

They fully intended to return and try to arrange the rescue of Spotted Tail and Capt. Boyd; or, at the least, to take part in the big fight which they looked for when Custer brought up his men in response to the message carried by Dove Eye.

They could not know, of course, that that message had gone astray because the messenger had herself been captured.

They looked for help to come speedily, for they were well aware that Custer was not the man to let the grass grow under his feet, once he knew of the danger.

After they had disposed of the redskins who were following them, and had made sure, by careful scouting, that no others were in sight, they made a wide detour by means of which they gradually approached the camp of the Kiowas.

It was near sunset when they came in sight of it again, riding along in the cover by the river bank.

Picketing their horses in timber where they could not be seen, they held a council of war to decide what course they had better adopt.

"Shall we wait till Custer comes, and then help him to make a complete surprise of the camp by our knowledge of its location; or shall we try to take the two prisoners to-night, even at the risk of alarming the redskins and making them quit the camp?"

This was the question as it was put by Buckskin Sam.

Buffalo Bill pondered over it deeply for some time, and then he said:

"We do not know what may happen to delay Custer. It is even possible that Dove Eye may not have got through with the message, although I hardly think that.

"We cannot tell what may be done to Spotted Tail and Boyd, and we dare not leave them in the lurch like this. It is true they were not to be killed until they got to the Kiowa village, but you can never tell when a scoundrel like Yellow Bear, angered by something they did or said, may kill them.

"No, we must try to get in to the camp to-night, at all hazards, and rescue them. It will be a pretty risky business; but it will have to be done."

Buckskin Sam agreed with his friend and leader, and



they decided that they would make their attempt at the darkest hour of the night, a little while before the rising of the moon.

First of all, they would attempt to get hold of two of the redskins' horses, and picket them near the camp, beside their own. It would, of course, be almost hopeless to try to make the escape on foot.

The taking of the horses would be no easy matter, for the corral in which the horses were kept at night was, perhaps, more carefully guarded than any other part of the camp. Of all the things that he owns, an Indian prizes most his war ponies. They are as the apple of his eye, and he takes the utmost precautions to guard them.

It was not yet dark, and Buffalo Bill decided that he would take another and a more careful survey of the Indian camp, so that he could find out, if possible, in what part of it the two captives were confined.

Leaving Sam in charge of the horses, he walked up the bank of the river, under cover of the long reeds, until he had got as near to the camp as he dared go without running the almost certain risk of being seen. Then he thought that he could make out the movements of the redskins better if he got to the top of one of the trees which seemed by its height to tower over all the rest.

So, leaving his guns below, and removing his hunting coat and belt, he embraced the trunk of the tallest cottonwood in the vicinity, and by the good use of his pliant and supple limbs, soon reached the nearest branches.

It was a matter of considerable labor, for the trunk was more than an armful for the scout, so when he reached the first limb he paused to rest. It was darker up there among the thick branches than he had thought it would be, and he was now certain that he could not distinguish things on the plain below clearly, so he thought he would wait and take things easy. There was a mist that had gathered up from the stream. Perhaps, if a puff of wind came to blow it away, he would still be able to carry out his purpose.

Cody, therefore, took a good, long rest on the first branch, and then leisurely commenced to go higher.

Thicker and thicker grew the leafy branches around him, but that was all the better for him. There would be the less danger of his being discovered on his lofty lookout by those whom he had gone up to watch. If they saw him, and waited for him at the base of the trunk, he would, of course, be doomed. He was unarmed, and there would be no possible way of escape.

He was well up in the tree—almost to the top—before

he stopped and looked down to see if the expected puff of wind had come and dissipated the mist below him.

Then he started in sudden alarm—and he has since declared that it was one of the few times when he was scared almost out of his skin.

Small wonder, indeed, that he was!

The peril he had now to encounter was enough to blanch the cheeks of the bravest man.

He heard a strange, purring noise near to him, and he knew, even without seeing it, that he was close to a she panther or cougar, and that probably her young were up in the tree with her.

## CHAPTER XII.

### A STRANGE FIGHT WITH A PANTHER.

In that terrible moment Buffalo Bill wished most fervently that he had brought a revolver with him when he climbed up the tree, or, at least, a knife. He determined that if he got out of this business alive, which he hardly expected to do, he would not let himself be caught without his weapons again.

He looked cautiously around, and soon saw what seemed like two great balls of fire—and then a smaller pair in advance of the first.

They were the eyes of a she panther and her cub.

Buffalo Bill kept his eyes fixed steadily in that direction, and he soon made out the dim outlines of the two animals, which were crouched away in the darkest and thickest part of the branches near by him.

They rested on a branch only a trifle above him. It would be an easy spring for a panther to make.

He could hear the purring noise made by the dam, as if to assure her young one of protection.

It was music to his ears, for he knew the old one would not spring on him while that noise continued. As for the cub, he had no reason to fear that. It was too small, and it had not yet developed the natural ferocity of its nature.

What was he to do? If he moved, either to go higher or to descend, the chances were that the mother would spring on him. Brave as the king of the scouts was, he did not relish the idea of a rough-and-tumble fight, unarmed, with a panther on the swaying branches of a tree sixty or seventy feet above the ground. Besides, even if he managed, by some extraordinary luck, to overcome the panther, the noise of the struggle would probably attract the attention of the Indians who were so near by.

The king of the scouts, almost holding his breath, kept his eyes firmly fixed on the fiery orbs of the animal and remained motionless, waiting to see what would happen.



He knew that such animals would not, as a general thing, long face the human eye unless they were infuriated or wounded. But it is difficult to tell what any she cat will do when she is with her cub.

How slowly the time went!

At last the panther began to act uneasily.

She ceased her purring and remained savagely silent for several minutes, save for two or three low, fierce snarls.

Evidently she resented the continued presence of the man, and wondered what he wanted to do to her cub.

Then it arose and crawled along the branch, to get between the intruder and the cub.

Rising on its hind legs, it clawed the bark of the tree savagely, looking round at Buffalo Bill as if it was about to spring next moment.

But the king of the scouts did not for one single moment of that terrible duel of eyes lose his nerve or his courage. He could now plainly see the huge bulk of his antagonist, which was one of the largest panthers he had ever encountered.

Rearing up at full height on the branch, the animal peered at the scout from half behind the tree trunk. Its head was not more than three feet away from his, and he could feel its hot breath on his cheek.

Eye met eye, and the struggle—silent but none the less desperate—went on for at least two minutes at this close range. To Buffalo Bill, the time seemed more like two hours.

He knew that, if his glance wavered even for a second, he was lost. The animal would leap upon him at once if he so much as winked, for the eye charm by which he held her would be lost.

Thus they stood for what seemed an age, and then, slowly—very slowly—the panther drew back, still keeping its eyes on him until an intervening branch broke the spell.

Then, with a wild scream, the panther leaped off into the branches of another tree, a few feet distant, carrying her cub in her mouth.

She had not been able to endure the human eye.

As Buffalo Bill would not move, she had concluded to do so herself.

The king of the scouts had been the victor in the strangest and most dangerous duel he had ever fought.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### BUCKSKIN SAM'S RED HAND.

Buffalo Bill remained up the tree for some time. The mist had now drifted away, and he made his reconnoissance of the Indian camp, but did not learn much by it.

He could see no trace of the captives. They were hidden away in one of the numerous tepees which had been pitched; but there was nothing to show which one was their prison. Evidently their guard must be inside the tent with them, for there was no sentry stationed outside.

The scout saw that the force of the Kiowas had been largely increased. Several other war parties must have come in. The camp was carefully guarded, sentries being stationed all around it.

It would be no easy matter to creep into the camp and find the prisoners. Still harder would it be to get the two extra horses they needed, for the camp was most carefully guarded.

Cody returned to his friend and informed him of what he had seen. They decided that they would wait until near the dawn. It was barely possible that Custer, if he made a forced march, might arrive by that time.

At the time they had fixed upon, the two scouts crept through the long grass, with infinite caution, and approached the Indian village.

They carefully dodged two or three of the sentries, and got within the cordon.

Their work, so far, had been successfully accomplished, but it had only just begun.

Buffalo Bill, signing to his companion to follow, led the way to the corral. In the dim light of the stars, they could make out the forms of several Kiowas grouped around it, and they all seemed to be thoroughly vigilant. Yellow Bear, maddened by the loss of Buckskin Sam just at the moment when he was going to torture him to death, had given very careful instructions to his men to be on the alert. He knew that what he had done was not likely to go unpunished, and that he must be ready for an attack to be made upon his force at any moment.



Cody, slight though the chance of success was, was not the man to draw back once he had started.

He brought all his resources of plainscraft to bear, and by wonderful skill he got through the line of sentries, and had laid his hand on the stake rope of a fine pony.

At that very moment, he felt a heavy blow on the back of his head.

He tried to turn round and fight, but his senses reeled, his head swam, and he sank to the ground, unconscious.

A Kiowa sentry, who had observed him, had come up noiselessly behind and struck him a violent blow on the back of his head with the flat of his tomahawk.

Buckskin Sam was some little distance behind, and was not in time to prevent the blow from falling. But he dashed forward madly to avenge it.

He drove his knife deep into the body of the Indian, and then, standing over the unconscious form of Buffalo Bill, he blazed away with both revolvers at the swarm of Kiowas who rushed up to attack him.

That fight is still spoken of in the lodges of the Indian tribes on the great plains. It gained for Buckskin Sam the nickname of "Red Hand," so many were the redskins whom he slew in those few, brief moments before his revolvers were empty, he was overpowered by numbers, and bound with rawhide thongs.

The delight of Yellow Bear at the capture of both his hated enemies may readily be imagined.

He gave orders that they should be bound to stakes at dawn, shot at with arrows, and tortured, and then burned alive.

The braves were only too delighted at this fiendish plan.

At the first rosy flush of sunlight, the two men were tied to two trees, as there was no time to prepare stakes.

The redskins, retiring to a short distance, shot at them with small arrows, trying to pierce the flesh and make slight wounds without hurting them mortally.

In this fiendish work they were only too skillful, but the scouts declined steadfastly to utter a groan, although they were enduring the greatest agony.

The Indians, used though they were to courage under torture, were amazed at the dauntless fortitude displayed by Buffalo Bill and his brother scout.

"Light the fire," commanded Yellow Bear, in a harsh and disappointed tone.

Before any of the braves could advance to carry out this order, the ear-splitting, frightful war cry of the Apaches sounded from the timber by the river bank near by.

It was followed instantly by a cloud of arrows and a rain of bullets.

More than half of the Kiowas grouped around the two tortured men fell dead on the spot, for Strong Hand, the Apache chief, had taught his men to aim straight and true. They were infinitely better marksmen than the common run of redskins.

Yelling his war cry again, Strong Hand led his braves in a furious charge out of the timber.

The fight was brief, but decisive.

The Kiowas could not withstand the terrible valor of the Arabs of the plains. They had a healthy respect for the Apaches, as had most of the other Indian tribes at that time; and their mere appearance sent them into a panic.

Yellow Bear, mad with rage, drew his tomahawk and rushed forward, determined to brain the two bound pale-faces whom he hated before he went to the happy hunting grounds himself.

Before he could reach them, a bullet from the rifle of Strong Hand stretched him dead upon the ground.

The fight was now over.

Strong Hand was surprised to find the two white prisoners, and at first he was a bit in doubt as to whether he should not lift their scalps himself. But he was a redskin of chivalrous nature, and, as he had saved their lives, he felt that he could not afterward take them.

He released them, and found Spotted Tail and Capt. Boyd in one of the tepees, bound hand and foot.

With the four men, closely guarded as prisoners, he and his braves set out on the trail back to their camp.

What was their amazement, toward the middle of the day, to meet, as they ascended a rise in the plain, a powerful force of white soldiers, under Gen. Custer.

Riding by the general's side, and guiding the column, was Dove Eye, the Rose of the Pawnees.



After the departure of Strong Hand on his warlike mission for her benefit, she had contrived to escape from the braves in whose custody he had left her.

She got away on horseback and immediately headed, at the best speed of which her mount was capable, for the fort. She arrived there safely, dodging the braves who, fearful of the vengeance of Strong Hand, pursued her hotly.

But, once at the fort, she had not found it easy to get speech with Custer. A young sentry, ignorant of Indian ways and disbelieving her story, held her up and was going to arrest her.

Quick as a flash, she drew her knife and turned on him. Little savage that she was, she would have stabbed him to the heart without the least compunction if her hand had not been caught by a tall, distinguished-looking officer who happened to stroll out to the gate of the fort at that moment.

The man was Custer, and, when he heard Dove Eye's message, he was as prompt to take action as Buffalo Bill had declared he would be.

When he sighted the white soldiers, Strong Hand instantly called a halt.

At first he seemed inclined to fight them, but Buffalo Bill pointed out to him the folly of such a course.

"Do you not see that the soldiers of the Great White Father have three cannons with them that pour our bullets like the hail from heaven?" said the king of the scouts.

"The moment you and your men advance, those guns will begin to fire, and the Apaches will be mown down like corn by the reaper."

The chief saw that this was true. He had heard a great deal about the quick-firing guns of the palefaces and the terrible havoc they wrought. Brave and warlike though he was, he had no desire to go up against them with the small force under his command.

"But what are the Apaches to do?" he asked. "See, the big chief of the palefaces is setting his men in battle array. Soon he will attack, and his big rifles on wheels will speak like the lightning."

"I'll make that all right for you, Strong Hand, if you leave it to me."

The Apache chief signified his consent, and Buffalo Bill thereupon rode out toward Custer's force, followed by Buckskin Sam, Capt. Boyd and Spotted Tail.

The king of the scouts tied a white handkerchief on the barrel of a rifle, and waved it as he advanced.

In a few moments he was shaking hands with Custer.

"We thought that you were dead, Cody, and that it would fall to our lot to avenge you," said the famous general.

"No, general, I'm still in the ring, and hope to stay there for a good many years yet."

"I don't think the bullet has been cast that will kill you," laughed Custer. "But who are these redskins you are with? They are not Kiowas, but Apaches, unless I mistake. Your flag of truce was just in time, for I was about to open fire on them with the guns."

Buffalo Bill explained how the Apaches had rescued him and his friends from the Kiowas when their doom appeared certain, and had then taken them along as prisoners.

"Their chief does not want to fight," he concluded, "and I've no doubt he will be glad to have a powwow with you and come to some arrangement."

"Well, he will have to give up his prisoners, of course, and promise to go back at once to the Mexican border. We cannot allow these Apaches to roam at their will about the plains. They will stir up too much trouble with the other tribes."

Custer summoned a scout in his command, and sent him, under a flag of truce, to Strong Hand, summoning the latter to a powwow.

The Apache chief promptly obeyed the order, and, after a few minutes conference, readily agreed to do as the general demanded. He had, indeed, no alternative; for he saw clearly that the white force was superior in numbers to his own, as well as better armed. If it had come to fighting, his men would have been wiped out in a few minutes.

"We will camp on the plains for six days to hunt the buffalo and dry meat for our journey home," he said. "Then I swear by the Great Spirit we will go back to our hunting grounds by the Rio Grande."



Custer agreed to this and invited the chief to camp near the soldiers. He wanted to keep the Apaches under his eye as much as possible.

Turning to leave the general and go back to his braves, Strong Hand came face to face with Dove Eye, who was talking joyfully to her father near by, and expressing her delight at his safety.

In an instant, the Apache's passion for the girl flamed up. With half a dozen quick strides, he was by her side.

Wondering what he was going to do, Spotted Tail sprang in front of the girl, ready to protect her, if need were; while Buffalo Bill and Buckskin Sam also ran up to her side.

Dove Eye calmly faced the impassioned Apache, with a look in her eye that certainly did not betoken love.

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#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### A STRUGGLE FOR DOVE EYE.

For a few moments the Tiger of the Apaches looked at Dove Eye in silence, seeming to struggle with a spirit of anger in his breast. Then his brow cleared.

"Dove Eye, the Rose of the Pawnees, has not treated Strong Hand fairly," he said. "She fled from the braves he appointed to watch over her. It matters not. She is as brave as she is beautiful. She is well worthy to be the wife of a great warrior.

"Strong Hand has done what he promised to do. He has saved her father from the Kiowas, who would have bound Spotted Tail to the stake of torture. He has taken the scalp of Yellow Bear, and wears it in his belt.

"The Tiger of the Apaches is a great chief. He has more ponies than he can count. He will give many of them to Spotted Tail if he may take Dove Eye for his wife. What says the chief of the Pawnees?"

"Strong Hand must ask Dove Eye and abide by what she says," replied Spotted Tail, looking fondly at his daughter. "Long ago Spotted Tail swore an oath by the Great Spirit that his child should wed no man against her will; and that oath he will keep. Spotted Tail cares nothing for the ponies of the Apache. He has many of his own."

"Then what says Dove Eye?" asked the young chief.

"That if Strong Hand owned all the horses on the plains, she would not marry him," the girl replied, with spirit. "Let the Apache seek a wife among the maidens of his own people. Dove Eye loves Long Hair, the great white chief, and she will wed no man but him."

At this very plain announcement, Buffalo Bill blushed right up to the roots of his hair with embarrassment, the more so as Custer and some of his officers had sauntered up to listen to the conversation.

Buckskin Sam came to his rescue.

"But you can't marry Long Hair, Dove Eye," he said, earnestly. "He is in love with another woman—a white girl—and he is pledged to her."

"That matters not," returned the lovelorn girl, calmly. "Long Hair is a great hunter. He can kill enough meat to feed many wives. Dove Eye will share him with the white girl."

"Oh, but white men don't do that kind of thing unless they are Mormons," said Sam. "You'll have to give Buffalo Bill up, Dove Eye. Won't you take me instead? I love you, and I want you to be my wife."

Dove Eye smiled kindly on the scout, for whom she had conceived a real liking; but shook her head.

Strong Hand saw the smile, and instantly became furious with jealousy.

"Does Dove Eye love this paleface dog?" he demanded, in a voice tense with passion.

Before the Pawnee girl had time to answer, Buckskin Sam, quick to anger and equally quick to act, struck the Apache a stunning blow with his clinched fist fair in the face.

"No red cuss shall call me a dog without finding out that I can bite!" he cried, as the Indian fell to the ground, stunned for the moment.

Several of the soldiers ran forward to secure the Apache and the man who had struck him, but Custer waved them back.

"Buckskin Sam was insulted, and he knew how to take his own part," he said. "That's all there is to it. We have nothing to do with this quarrel."



"The white chief is right," Strong Hand hissed, slowly rising from the ground, still dizzy from the blow he had received. "But," he added, turning fiercely on Buckskin Sam, "there is war between us. One of us must die—and that soon!"

"I'm agreed on that, and the one who dies will not be me," said the scout, coolly.

"Spotted Tail is a great brave. Let him say how we shall fight, and then let it be war, and not words," said the Apache.

"Agreed," replied Buckskin Sam.

"Would you fight as warriors fight, and before all the braves?" asked Spotted Tail.

"Yes, and before Dove Eye, too," replied Strong Hand, eagerly. "For her, I would gladly fight a hundred braves."

"Let two fresh horses be brought," said the Pawnee chief. "Then let the two, the Tiger of the Apaches and the Red Hand, mount upon them, each stripped to the waist and armed only with a knife. Let them ride apart the distance of an arrow's flight, and then let them come together as they will. Spotted Tail has spoken."

"Look here, Buckskin," said Custer. "Of course, I can't sanction a fight of this kind. It's equally certain that I can't expect you to refuse the Apache's challenge. That would lower us all in the eyes of the redskins. What are we going to do about it?"

"That's simple enough, general," put in Buffalo Bill. "The general officer commanding the expedition need not know anything officially about the matter, but if George Custer cares to look on in his private capacity, I don't suppose anybody will raise objections or report the matter to Washington."

Custer laughed, but grew serious again in a moment.

"Do you think Sam has any chance against this redskin?" he whispered to the border king. "The knife is an Indian's weapon. I wish they were fighting with guns."

"Sam knows how to use the knife, too," said Buffalo Bill. "The red will have to be a pretty smart brave to beat him. If he does happen to kill Sam—well, I'll challenge him and do my best to kill him, that's all."

Following Spotted Tail, the two combatants mounted

on the horses that were brought to them and rode out on the prairie about a quarter of a mile from the soldiers' halting place. They were then about the same distance from the Apaches. The fight was to take place midway between the two little armies, and in plain sight of both.

"Take care of these, girl, and, if I fall, keep them for my sake."

As he said these words, Buckskin Sam took off his fringed hunting shirt, his bullet pouch, and powderhorn, and his belt, with his pistols and knife scabbard. He gave them to the Pawnee girl, to whom he also handed his fine rifle.

The knife he was about to use—a long, straight-bladed, hunting knife—needed no scabbard now. But, with careful forethought, the scout took a slender thong of buckskin, attaching it to the buck-horn handle of his knife, fastened it to his wrist.

Now, naked to the waist, the knotted muscles of his white arms showing tremendous strength, his broad shoulders and full chest free from all encumbrances, the scout looked ready to do successful battle against his brawny and gigantic antagonist.

"Is the paleface ready—or would he wait to say his prayers?" asked Strong Hand, sneeringly.

"I haven't much praying to do just now, Mr. Copperhead," retorted Sam, coolly. "But you had better make up your mind that you're going to the happy hunting grounds."

Turning again to Dove Eye, Sam took her hand, and said:

"Girl, if I don't get another chance to say it—good-by. I love you, and I'm going to fight like lightning to get this Apache out of your way. He's too dangerous to you to be allowed to go around loose. I mean to put the snake where he can't trouble you any more."

"Fight and kill him!" exclaimed Dove Eye, fiercely. "And if he kills you, I will kill him."

"Now, Spotted Tail," said Sam, springing on his horse, "where are the bounds? I'm ready to sail in."

The Pawnee chief pointed to two spears which he had planted in the ground about two hundred yards away from one another. Many of the soldiers and Apaches had



hurried up and already grouped themselves around this spot, so that they could have a close view of the fight.

"Red Hand will take the spear nearest to the sun—the Apache chief the other, for a post," said the Pawnee. "When Spotted Tail waves his arms in the air, you are to begin the fight. The end rests with yourselves. Are you both ready now?"

"I am, but Strong Hand is not," replied Sam. "See, he wears a shield upon his breast, while mine is bare. That is not fair."

"It is only the sign of my rank," said the Apache, as he laid his hand upon a golden emblem of the sun, which was as large as the crown of the hat which the scout had just cast down.

"Bare your breast, you coward, as I have done," demanded Buckskin.

With a look of gloomy hatred, the Apache did as he was bidden, lifting the symbol from his breast.

It had more meaning than Sam had suspected, for it had been taken by the medicine man of his tribe from an ancient Aztec temple. The priest had given it to him, and assured him that, while he wore it, he would be invulnerable to all the weapons of his enemies.

Now that he was forced to lay it aside, his superstitious nature was troubled, and for the first time a doubt whether he would win the fight crossed his mind.

He offered the symbol to Dove Eye to hold for him, as she now held the weapons and trappings of his enemy.

With a look of bitter scorn, she refused to take it, and he was obliged to give it into the charge of one of his own warriors.

Now, with that off, his pride seemed to go, too. Angrily, he tore off all his gaudy trappings, and in a few seconds his giant form was bare to the waist, like that of his adversary.

"Is the paleface satisfied?" he cried, waving his long, glittering knife in the air, as he vaulted easily into the saddle.

"Yes—each to his post," said Sam, riding off to the spear which had been assigned to him.

As soon as the two men were at their stations the Pawnee chief gave the signal for them to close.

With a terrible yell the Apache dashed forward on a direct line for the scout, while the latter, with his horse at an easy gallop, rode on to meet his enemy's terrific charge.

## CHAPTER XV.

### STRONG HAND MEETS HIS MASTER.

As Sam rode, erect and easy, it seemed as if the red-skin, lying prone upon his horse, with one hand clutching the mane, and the other stretched forward with the knife pointed, would have a terrible advantage.

But when the horses were almost breast to breast the black steed of the scout, touched in the flank by his rider's heel, bounded fully a yard to one side.

Sam, clinging with one hand to the girth on the back, reached far over and slashed a deep wound in the back of the Apache, who supposed himself to be out of reach.

Wildly yelling, the Indian drew rein and wheeled his horse around to chase Sam, who seemed to be flying from him.

But, quicker than thought, the black horse also wheeled and reared full in front of the flying steed of the Apache. That animal fell back on its haunches, and both horses stood with their fore-feet in the air, furiously striking and biting at one another, while the knives of their riders played to and fro like lightning in alternate thrust and parry.

So close were they that the bystanders, less than a hundred yards away, could hardly distinguish between them, or get any idea which man was gaining the advantage.

This bout lasted scarcely a minute, though to the excited spectators it seemed much longer. Then, suddenly, a knife was seen to fly high up in the air and fall to the ground yards away from the two combatants.

One was disarmed. Which one was it? Dove Eye trembled now for the first time, and realized that she cared more for Buckskin Sam than she had imagined. If he had lost his knife, she knew that his doom was sealed. His adversary would show him no mercy.

But it was not the scout who had lost the weapon.

He was seen to touch his horse, which wheeled away



from the front of the other; then he rode in a short circle, waving his blood-stained knife above his head.

Bending as he rode, he picked up the knife that had been struck from the hand of the Apache.

He was bleeding from several slight wounds, but Strong Hand was in worse case.

Covered with blood from half a dozen deep gashes, he sat as rigid as a statue on his horse, awaiting, with folded arms, the death blow which he expected—the death blow which he would certainly have given if luck had been with him.

Sam looked at him, as he sat there fearlessly, and realized that he could not slay him in cold blood, even for Dove Eye's sake.

Tossing his knife toward the mortified chief, he cried:

"Take better care of it next time, Tiger of the Apaches. Pick it up and try your luck again."

"Strong Hand is not a dog to take life from the hand of the paleface he hates," shouted the maddened chief, stung to fury by the sound of the mocking laughter of Dove Eye. "He has made his life a shame, and now he will throw it away."

He snatched the knife from the ground as he said this and drove it up to the hilt into the heart of his trembling horse.

The animal fell to the ground with a quiver. Without hesitating for a moment, the haughty chief pulled out the reeking weapon and plunged it in his own breast.

He fell dead upon his horse, and the duel was over.

The Apaches greeted the death of their chief with a yell of grief and rage, but the threatening aspect of the soldiers and the sight of their rifles kept them back. They were permitted to take up the body of Strong Hand, and they departed with it at once, the chief now in command telling Custer that they would go back at once to their own hunting grounds, without waiting to hunt the buffalo.

"Paleface," said this chief, going to the spot where Buckskin Sam stood, "the Apaches go back to their own land to bury their chief in the ground where his fathers

have been laid. But the spirit of the great Tiger of the Apaches will never rest while you walk the earth. We go now because the fight was fair, and our chief shook hands with Spotted Tail and agreed to the conditions. We will not break the peace he agreed to. But we shall come again wherever you go, and, sooner or later, we shall take your scalp."

Buckskin Sam gravely saluted the brave.

"Fair warning!" he said. "Then I shall make a point of shooting Apaches on sight in future, without stopping to powwow with them."

Without another word the chief turned on his heel and left him. How the Apaches tried to carry out their threat of vengeance and were frustrated by Buffalo Bill will be told soon in one of the stories of this series.

Spotted Tail came up to Sam and congratulated him warmly on his skill and success in the fight. It had given him the greatest respect for the scout.

"You are a great brave," said the old Pawnee, "and I adopt you for my son. I name you Tiger Slayer, as well as Red Hand."

"Do you hear that, Dove Eye?" said Sam, in delight. "The old man adopts me for his son. What do you say to that?"

Dove Eye blushed and would not answer. It was months before Sam managed to get from her the answer that he wished, after she thoroughly understood that it was useless for her to hope to marry the king of the scouts.

THE END.

"Buffalo Bill's Terrible Throw; or, The Strong Arm of the Border King," will be the title of the next story in THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES, No. 231. It will relate one of the most striking adventures in the life of the king of the scouts, telling how he vanquished, unarmed, a giant red-skin who attacked him armed to the teeth. The peculiar manner in which this feat was accomplished is still talked about by old plainsmen out West. Buy next week's story and read all about it.

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